ان الدین عند اللہ الاسلام

The Review of Religions

Edited by Ghulam Farid Malik, M. A.

Vol. XXXII SEPTEMBER, 1933 No. 9

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بسم اللہ الرحمن الرحیم

نحمدہ ونصلی علی رسولہ الکریم

In the name of Allah, the most Beneficent and the most Merciful
We praise Him and invoke His blessings upon
His exalted Prophet.

" A prophet came unto the world and the world accepted him not, but God shall accept him and establish his truth with mighty signs."

ISLAM'S MESSAGE TO AMERICA

[In reply to a request from the General Executive of the World Fellowship of Faiths, Hazrat Khalifatul Masih II, Head of the Ahmadiyya Community, sent through his private secretary the following Message for its opening meeting on 27 August. The Fellowship is convening a sort of a Conference of Religions during Chicago's second World's Fair, June to November, 1933. The Ahmadiyya Community will be represented in this Conference by Sufi Muti-ur-Rahman Bengalee, M. A., and Dr. Yusuf Khan.—*Ed.*]

I am deeply interested in the aims and objects of the World Fellowship of Faiths, for in these I see the fulfilment of the declaration made by the Holy Quran 1350 years ago, namely, that there is no nation in the world to which a prophet of God has not been sent and that unmixed evil can never find a lasting footing in the earth. The faiths that have been publicly preaching their teachings for hundreds and thousands

of years and have succeeded in winning the zealous devotion of millions of men could not possibly have sprung from an impure and filthy source or lost all their original beauty and charm. I am not one of those who think that man can attain nearness to God by following any path, but I do believe that in order to enable people to reach a tower of light well-lit roads are a necessity. He who makes the roads dark does indeed try to make the tower desolate. Similarly one who sees the triumph of his own faith in finding fault with others is woefully misguided. If the Light of God is not present in every country and in every nation in some form or other, people will lose their power of vision and when the power of vision is lost, light is of no avail. Those, therefore, who strive to keep people acquainted with the truth that every faith possesses some beauty in one form or other render a meritorious service in keeping the standard of truth erect and it is for this reason that I think that the World Fellowship of Faiths is rendering a great service to the world and it is necessary that the efforts of this movement should be extended and helped in all parts of the world. I, as Head of the Ahmadiyya Community, promise to render this society every help in my power and I assure them that in these days the will of our Lord God is also in support of their efforts. The angels in Heavens are sounding the trumpet of peace. He who does not listen to this heavenly call to-day shall listen to it to-morrow, and he who will not listen to it to-morrow shall listen to it the day after, but listen he shall. Blessed are they who bury the hatchet at the first call and extend to their brethren the hand of peace and goodwill, for it is they over whose hand will be the hand of God and it is they who will inherit the Kingdom of Heaven.

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THE MUSLIM AND CHRISTIAN SOCIAL SYSTEMS

A Comparison and a Contrast

On a superficial view, the Muslim and the Christian social systems present to the student of sociology a certain similarity, but a closer examination soon reveals that this resemblance is more apparent than real and rests mainly in the fact that both the systems, like their founders are of Semitic origin. Originally, however, Christianity never aimed at setting up either a polity or a social system; the teachings of Jesus Christ as they have reached us are confined to a collection of more or less loose ethical precepts, without any particular attempt to co-ordinate these, or build them up into a system; whereas the Founder of Islam (may peace be on him !) being as much a statesman as a religious reformer foresaw that no ethic could live as it were *in vacuo*, and accordingly erected a social political system, the structure of which holds essentially unaltered to this day, and which is the best that the world has known. To this system we shall presently return.

Development of Christianity

The Founder of Christianity, on the other hand, made as we have seen, no attempt to build up a social or a political system. On the countrary such practical teachings of this kind were of a negative order, tending rather towards anarchism than towards the establishment of any system. The teaching "Resist not evil," for instance, if rigorously followed must ultimately lead to the most absolute anarchism and indeed the late Count Tolstoy carried it to its logical conclusion when he erected round it a system of political anarchism. On the social side, the teaching of Jesus Christ in regard to the woman accused of adultery, "Let him that is without sin among you cast the first stone," must again, if carried to its ultimate conclusion lead to anarchy, since it strikes at the whole social penal system.

European Christianity

Christianity, however, did not develop along the lines laid down by its Founder. On the contrary, it was forced very soon to adapt itself to the conditions of the predominant civilization of the day, that of Rome; the choice before the early Fathers was that of either adapting themselves to Roman ideas and thus becoming the imperial religion, or of extinction. Not unnaturally they choose the former, and Christianity very soon took on a Roman form. So far as Church Government was concerned, the Fathers took their methods entirely from the imperial system, while doctrinally they were largely influenced by the neo-Platonic ideals which had coloured, and even overlaid the old Roman paganism. The very holidays of the Church, Christmas and Easter, were taken from the Roman Calendar and of course given a Christian setting

Romanized Christianity

It was on these Romanized lines that Christianity developed in its early days, and indeed the Roman Catholic Church is essentially more Roman than Catholic in its constitution. Later, the Christian Church, and indeed the Christian social system was strongly influenced by feudalism, with which it came to be closely allied; and socially mediæval feudalism had perhaps a greater influence on the Christian social system than anything else. It was from mediæval feudalism that the Christian social system took its essentially aristocratic character, and became the supporter of privilege against democracy. The Reformation, later, was originally a democratic movement; but on the Continent it had to depend for its support on a turbulent nobility who saw in it a weapon to use against the monarchy, while in England the whole movement was swept away by a turbulent King, who used it to free himself from the irksome authority of the papacy, and make the English Kingship, "in all things temporal as well as spiritual supreme."

An Aristocratic System

Whatever the process, however, the result has been that Christianity is an aristocratic religion. Throughout

history the Church has always appeared as the staunch supporter, not only of monarchy, but at times of tyranny. Under the feudal system the tyrannical barons had no stauncher supporters than the churchmen of the time. In England, Tudor and Stuart despots were always loyally supported by the clergy, who in fact, were the authors of the theory of "the divine right of Kings." When the people of France rose against the tyranny of King and nobles, they realized that their revolt would be of little avail unless they destroyed the Church that lent spiritual authority to the material oppression of the temporal powers. And it was from a similar political motive that the Bolshevists declared war against the Russian Church.

Islamic Democracy

Islam, on the contrary, has from the beginning been democratic. The Muslim constitutional theory is based on considerations of democracy. The Caliphate throughout was controlled by the principle of election, and generally Muslim jurisprudence has favoured the political theories of Locke holding that ultimately the people are supreme, rather than Hobbes who favoured absolute monarchy. In practice, Islam is the most completely democratic system in the world, the only one, *Where name of slave and Sultan scarce is known.*

The Brotherhood of Islam

The basic idea of the Muslim social system has always been that of brotherhood; not only are all men equal, but men are brothers. Rulers there are, as there must be in every well-ordered State, but their condition and function is that of an expert and efficient executive, rather than of an aristocratic caste. The ideal of the Muslim ruler has always been that he is the servant of those he has been appointed to rule, whereas under European ideas, the ruler is a privileged aristocrat.

Women and Slaves

It has been brought up as a reproach against Islam that it has sanctioned the keeping of slaves and the seclusion of

women, but this ideal springs generally either from ignorance or mischievous propaganda. As regards slaves, slavery was a universally recognized system at the time that both Christianity and Islam arose. Both of them recognized it, with the difference that Islam wisely legislated for the humane treatment of slaves and their gradual and ultimate emancipation, and in fact their position in Muslim countries was far more tolerable than in Christian America.

Position of Women

As regards women, their position under Islam is and has for long been far better than it is under Christianity. Long before any of European social systems recognized the rights of women to property of their own, Islam did so; and even now in this respect the position of Muslim women is far superior to that of Christian. For instance, the admirable system of *mehr* provides for them at once a marriage settlement and a dowry, a humane arrangement existing under no European social system.

Divorce

In Europe and America, there is to-day, movement towards more easy and rational divorce. Islam long ago recognized the need for divorce, not only for men but for women, and from the beginning divorce on reasonable grounds has been open to both sexes. In Europe on the other hand, it was long before divorce except by the most costly and complicated processes was possible. The Roman Catholic Church still refuses to recognize it, reactionary Church of England clergymen still refuse to marry divorced couples.

Muslim Marriage

It is perhaps in its treatment of women and their rights that the Islamic polity is obviously more enlightened than that of the Christian countries. The whole Christian theory and practice of marriage has been and still is coloured by the monastic idea of the uncleaness of women and the theological virtue of celibacy. In the early days of Christianity, when the

Church had not far departed from the ideas of its founders, the Christian idea of marriage was sane and rational. Then came the ascetic and fanatical St. Paul with his doctrine of "it is better to marry than to burn", and he was followed by clerics who, in a reaction against the licentiousness of imperial Rome, exalted celibacy into a virtue.

The Idea of the Schoolmen

The mediæval Schoolmen, men like Augustine, preached celibacy as a virtue, and only allowed cohabitation, as a concession to human passion. Even so, the doctrine of the celibacy of the clergy took long to formulate and still longer to enforce, and was not in fact enforced until Hildebrand, better known as Pope Gregory IV won his long battle with the Emperor. Whether the celibacy of the clergy is desirable or not, may conceivably be a debatable point, but it is certain that the doctrine of the uncleanness of women did much to lower the position of the sex in mdiæval, in Renaissance, and even in closely modern times. It was as a direct result of this theory that marriage came to be regarded as a divine sacrament only to be licenced by the clergy, instead of, as is the case in all civilized States to-day, as a civil contract.

Indissoluble Union

One result of this idea of marriage as a licence to a forbidding theory, only to be sanctioned by the clergy, was the Roman Catholic theory of the indissolubility of marriage, which not only prevails in the Roman Church to-day, but which so far coloured and still colours English law as to make divorce an extremely difficult and expensive affair. The Christian theory of divorce is that it does not exist except as a concession to be wrung from the Church on some theological quibble, whereas Islam has always recognized it as the necessary alternative in case of strife of an extraordinarily solemn civil contract.

The Result

The result of the European system as it still prevails in continental countries, and to some extent in England, has been

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to make divorce so expensive and difficult as to enforce adultery on those who could not afford the time and trouble necessary for the dissolution of a bond they had found impossible to tolerate. In Islam, on the other hand, divorce on reasonable grounds is open to either sex, as the dissolution of a civil contract of weight and importance. It is perhaps for this reason that we find adultery a far less common vice among the Islamic peoples than among Christians.

Women's Right to Property

The Christian States for long refused to recognize the rights of women either to property or inheritance. So far as inheritance is concerned, English law is founded on the principle of a male primogeniture, which practically denies all rights to women; in continental Europe the Salic law had for long shut out women from sovereign rights. Islam, on the contrary, has long recognized the right of women to a proportionate share in every inheritance, a right far in advance of that granted by Christian States. The right of married women to own property, only recognized by law a few decades ago has long been inherent in Muslim law; which indeed by the admirable institution of the *Mehr* secures to every woman at once the right to a settlement and dowry.

Political Rights

We have thus seen that Islam abundantly—far more so than the Christian States, recognizes the rights of the weaker states. In so far as it admitted slavery, it defined the position of slaves, far more equitably than, say the French Seyneorial law, or English or American practices many centuries after the *Hijrat*. Politically its theory of rule is founded on the elective principle, its franchise universal. In practice the social system of Islam admits all men not only to equality and liberty but to fraternity. What other system can claim this ?

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RACE PRIDE AND PREJUDICE

By Maulvi Muhammad Din, B. A., Late Muslim Missionary in America.

It was the tenth of Dhil Hijj of the year 10 of the Hegira. There was a large concourse of Muslim pilgrims, how large it can not be said definitely but it was computed to be at about one hundred thousand. The Muslims had gathered from all parts of Arabia, for it was rumoured about that the Prophet of God had had presages of his early departure from life. So this occasion was made the most of by everybody and by the Prophet himself particularly. An official proclamation was made as early as the preceding month of Dhil Qaida that the Holy Prophet was minded to make a special pilgrimage that season. Hence the gathering of the faithful from the four corners of the country to take part in this auspicious ceremony.

It is a long story, of course, of what the Prophet of God said or did on this occasion. Suffice it to say that in view of the coming departure of his from this life he made a public declaration of the essentials of Islam and exhorted all those present to convey it to those who were absent, and that the world for future should know what Islam stood far. It was here that he concretely put forth before his followers what he had all along been teaching them, day in and day out. He said many things which are well-known to students of religion as well as history and they stand as beacon lights to students of ethics, economics, sociology, as well as seekers after God and truth. One of the announcements that he made on the occasion was that "he abolished all rites and practices associated with the days of ignorance and darkness," and that "the Arab as such enjoyed no superiority over the non-Arab nor the non-Arab as such over the Arab ; all were human beings and in that respect all were equal."

This pronouncement, clear and unequivocal, sounded the death-knell of all racial pride. It was the clarion call to all the depressed and the down trodden of the humanity to shed off their inferiority complex : equality and liberty were to be the birth rights of man henceforth. How far the Muslims have been true and faithful to the behests of the Master Prophet, Muhammad (Peace be with him and the Mercy of Allah), is not for an individual Muslim to brag about, for he has very often been not only very

remiss in the performance of his God-appointed duties but has on times been guilty of open flouting of this very sacred injunction. Yet in spite of these ebulitions and constant violations, the spirit of this Commandment has entered into the body-politic of Islam and the truest witnesses to the practical demonstration of this spirit are the greatest enemies of Islam themselves including the Christian missionary. I quote here from the *Muslim World* for July 1933 which is a quarterly published by no less a person than Dr. Zwemer of America, one of the bitterest enemies of Islam. Says the writer:

"I hesitate to emphasize the attractive simplicity of Muslim belief. *I do not want to create the impression that my*[1] *Catholicism has been shattered by long residence here.*[2] All that I shall say is that the Nicine creed of Islam is boiled down to twelve words. They are: "There is no God but God; Muhammad is the Apostle of Allah." This proclaims three principles: (1) The existence of a supreme Being, (2) the oneness of the supreme Being, (3) the fact that the man, Muhammad, was the apostle or Messenger of God. There are no dogmas and no priests.

"The Muslim propagandist may truthfully say that Islam stands for social equality. Talk 'Social Equality' to an American black and he is a sympathetic listener.

"I shall not elaborate these points. The latter is too obvious to require proof. The former has over 1,300 years of history to substantiate it. Mohammedanism has always taught—and what is more—has always practiced that colour forms no barrier. The Circassion Mohammedan, whose skin is white, looks upon the Sudanese Moslem, whose pigment is black, as his brother and deals with him as such if there be the slightest affinity between them. Princes in the old days treated as absolute equals their sons born of white wives and those begotten of black slaves."

The above is a quotation as I have already said from an article in the *Moslem World* for July 1933 which it has reprinted from the *Catholic World*, New York. It is headed "American

1. The italics are ours—*Ed.*
2. The U. S. A. representative in the mixed Tribunals, Cairo, Egypt.—*Ed.*

Negro Mohammedans." It is from the pen of *Judge Pierre Crabites,* who has been for a number of years the American representatives Judge of the mixed Tribunals, Cairo, Egypt, and whose article in the monthly *Asia* on *What Mahomet Did For Women* is reproduced elsewhere in this number. A perusal of the quotation given above as well as the other article reprinted in the pages of this very issue will leave no doubt on the mind of the reader as to the sanity and breadth of the view of the writer and every lover of truth will remember his remarks with grateful love, happen as they come, from a Roman Catholic Christian. To find such a nice and loveable man of wide experience and parts being swayed by political and racial motives as is evidenced by the general tenor of his article pertaining to the Negro Moslems of America can only be ascribed to the Christian as well as racial mentality fostered in Christendom. I cannot find it in my heart to condemn such a man of sweet reasonableness. Yet I cannot see why a man of his broad and tolerant views should get alarmed at the spread of Islam in America though it has barely touched even the fringe there. He says :

> "What counts is the fact that Mohammedanism has begun to germinate in the United States. I do not know to what extent the seed has grown. I can readily foresee a fruitful harvest of American black men and women."

He is afraid that sooner or later it will become another problem for America, for he has come across in the Near East some Negro Moslems who are American citizens. Some of them have come all the way from America to Egypt to work their way to Mecca to perform the holy pilgrimage. They tell "fabulous stories of growing Mohammadan congregations in Detroit Chicago, Buffalo, Worcester (Massachusetts) and Gary (Indiana)." This according to him, has inflamed the Levantine Moslems' imigination "that Islam was carrying America by storm." Upto this time the Moslems of both East and Near East had associated America mainly with Protestant Christian missionaries or archæologists. America in popular imagination, he says, stood for the uplift work which was being carried on by a 'numerous, ubiquitous, and tireless' army of Protestant American missionaries 'who are universally loved and respected.' This welfare work is sure to suffer for he thinks that now that Islam has invaded America, the 'Caucasion civilization, Christian propaganda, and Protestant

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The crux of the matter in the words of the writer is : "For generations America sold to the Near East not merchandise but ideals. Egypt exported to the United States cotton, onion and hides. Egyptians are now beginning to say that their creed is conquering the United States, and that this fact is proof of their intellectual superiority over America." So it is rabid patriotism pure and simple that has inspired the writer with the inditing of the article in question.

Again there is another consideration that could not well be over-looked by the writer. He envisages "the possibility of Muhammadanism becoming a black spot upon the American horizon' for he assures us 'that Islam to-day is making more converts in the world at large than any other religion.' These American Negroes are a growing menace for they are "getting into their blood this conception of a triumphant faith which stands for social equality and which countenances polygamy." They would be a standing menace to the American ideals of life abroad and a constant source of worry and annoyance to its diplomatic and consular representatives if they lived abroad. multiplied in numbers and continued enjoying Americian citizenship. Yet it would be worse if they chose to return back to their native land. "If these converts return to the United States, the ardent spirit of the neophyte and the sermons which they will preach make me shudder at the consequences which I see in store for America and particularly for the Southern States." The principles of Islam according to him may be admirably suited for the Levant or Near East, but he is convinced that these principles in the hands of the Negro American Muslims would work incalculable mischief in his country. Our sympathy goes out to him and his countrymen, but there is none that can stem the rising tide of Islam and our only advice to him and his compatriots would be to be prepared for it.

From the foregoing lines it would be amply clear that it is not merely the message of Islam that is unpalatable to our Christian friends in the West. It is the social pride and race consciousness which Islam has trodden under foot and crushed elsewhere that accounts for this overt as well as covert resistance to it. Islam cannot brook this mentality. In the checkered history of Islam this hydra-headed

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monster did sometimes raise its head but was at last laid low and now of course this monster has taken a new lease of life in the race-consciousness of the Nordics and the Anglo-Saxons as well as the Neo-Aryans of Hitler. How long is it going to flourish again God only knows, but this much is clear that if Islam is to be the ultimate religion of humanity, as the Word of God avers it shall, and as keen observers of world movements have definitely given it as their considered opinion that it is sure to, then the sooner we shed off this unhuman trait the better.

It would not be out of place to remark here that the *Muslim World* in reprinting this article in its issue for July 1933 has done a distinct disservice to the cause of humanity. Judge Pierre Crabites could be excused on the score of his belonging to a secular profession ; of course his whole upbringing has been American where race consciousness is at its height and where Ku Klux Klanism and lynchings are not unknown. He comes of the South where this racial hatred has of old existed in its acutest form. He is a true son of the South. He is American too, though not of the hustling aggressive type. He has written about it from the prevailing American point of view. He does not want to have a new problem added to the already aggravated colour problem. He is a man of the world. He wrote it for the *Catholic World* which of course is a sectarian, though secular, paper. He may have his excuses. But there can be none for Dr. Zwemer. He is out to defend and support Jesus and his Gospel. Does Christ stand for the colour bar ? Does righteousness brook this racial pride ? If racial pride is the negation of the kingdom of Heaven why should he of all men print it in his magazine ? Am I to understand that he wants to mend the failing fortunes of the foreign mission he is affiliated to ? It is highly regrettable indeed. But then I would say that he too can be excused ; for did not his own *Master* lay the foundation for this racial arrogance ? " Go not into the way of the Gentiles and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not," or again " Salvation " is of the " Jews ", or "cast not the bread of your children before dogs or pearls before the swine." Racial pride it was that led to the Jewish downfall and the same sense of over-bearing superiority is entering like a canker into the very vitals of the modern Western polity. Prophets of God are raised to lift the low, the humble, and the weak in the Earth. Islam's message for the lowly and down-trodden Negro if the White out of sheer racial blindness will not look to the writing on the wall.

THINGS MAHOMET DID FOR WOMEN

[By M. Pierre Crabites]

Had any one told me sixteen years ago that Mahomet was probably the greatest champion of women's rights the world has ever known, I should have thought that an attempt was being made at a new jest on a well-worn theme. But President Taft made me a judge in 1911 and sent me to Egypt to represent the United States in the Cairo Mixed Tribunals. I there came into intimate touch with a civilization that was new to me. I worked hard. I learned many things that interested me, others that enlarged my horizon and still others that surprized me. When all is said and done, however, nothing astonished me more than to have the proof driven home to me that before 632 A. D. the Prophet of Islam had accomplished more to safeguard the property rights of wives of his land than the Legislature of Louisiana has as yet done for her who bears my name and in speaking thus of the Pelican State I am citing only one of many American commonwealths.

One of my Egyptian colleagues, Ragheb Badr Pasha, took particular pleasure in calling to my attention the outstanding liberalism of Mohammadan Laws. He was, and happily still is, a very able judge. But behind his juristic lore is an abiding sense of humour. He knew that I was a product of occidental environments. He therefore assumed that I had but a vague idea, at best, of the status assigned to women by Islam. Looking back in recognition of the innate kindness of the man's heart and his love of a joke, I now see that he had taken a fancy to me and that he had made up his mind to initiate me into my new life. At practically our first interview accordingly, he felt called upon to tell me that he was poor and that his wife was rich. He then added, with a twinkle in his eye: "Should you, as an American, submit to such condition? I am helpless, I must do so." One day before I had cut my wisdom teeth, I dropped into his private office. There were

three or four fellaheen present besides the Pasha. A document in Arabic lay before them. "Come in," said my friend to me in French. "I am my wife's agent." These men want me to lease one of her farms. They have brought a contract all filled out, they are trying to persuade me to sign it. They forget that I can do nothing without submitting every detail to my principal. I have her power of attorney. She trusts me to that extent. I know her too well, however, to make use of it without first having her approval of everything." The sincerity of the man impressed me. Yet something told me that he could not be telling me the truth. It seemed preposterous to me that a Mohammadan husband could not validly do with his wife's property whatever he wanted. I had a notion that a Moslem woman was a kind of chattel that man employed for his own purposes. I could not bring myself to believe that such a nonentity had any rights whatsoever. But the categorical language that had been used made me desire to "Look up the law." I therefore decided to consult my English colleague.

I did not hesitate to lay my misgivings before him. He was one of those men who inspire confidence. He laughed as soon as I had told him my tale. "Ragheb is extremely clever and has a heart of gold," said he. "I am almost certain that the meeting to which you refer had nothing to do with any private business whatsoever. He knows that all foriegners have a radically wrong conception of the rights of Mohammadan wives. He wants you to get your bearings. He likes you. He told me so. He has a most practical turn of mind, and he is inventing concrete illustrations to drive home his point. His fairy-tale accentualises a fundamental truth."

With my appetite thus whetted for more data, I delved into Islamic laws, although they concerned indirectly my official duties. It did not take me long to learn that the Muslim looks upon marriage solely as a matter of contract, the terms of which depend, within very wide limits, on will of the parties. This agreement must be legalized by a *quadi* or judge. The husband, however, must first have paid over a dower to

his wife. No other formality is requisite. No religious ceremony is necessary. All this is very simple. Every feature nevertheless is pregnant with meaning.

This faculty of being able to write into the marriage contract practically anything that the two cooing doves may agree upon nonplussed me. I knew that throughout Europe the next of kin of the prospective couple get together and draw up some kind of financial pact bearing upon the bride's dower and like question. Here, however, was the very essence of marriage taken from the rubber stamp of church or state and made into the concrete expression of will or of the caprice of the man and woman. Such a deduction clearly flowed from any study of the text. But I thought that it would be wise to get Sheikh Mansur Nasar's reactions to the law. He was a most erudite old gentleman, and it was he who undertook the arduous task of bringing me into intellectual communion with the Near East. I have never met a more high-minded man. He spoke but one language. It was that of love for his fellow man expressed in purest of Arabic.

After I had explained to my friend what I had read and how immense was the vista my discovery seemed to open up before me, he drew his chair a little nearer to my desk and said, "Do not get frightened. You have grasped the spirit of the wisdom of the Prophet. He has done all this so that every father may be able to protect his daughter if and when he thinks it necessary to do so." It was a blistering Khamsin day. A sand-storm was blowing, and my windows were closed to keep out the heat. But, as the dear old Sheikh in his flowing silk robes and turban waxed warm with eloquence, I forgot all about the heat and listened with rapture. "Polygamy" said he, "has, as you know, almost disappeared from our city life. The fellah still prefers to have several wives just as your farmer always manages to have many children. Both need labour for their fields. In Cairo and in Alexandria, however, many fathers are unwilling for their sons-in-law to have plural wives. They therefore see to it that, when their girls marry, the contract

contains a clause providing that, should the husband take a second spouse, the first consort shall automatically have the option of divorcing him. The Prophet, in truth, so arranged matters that no man can possibly maltreat a woman if her advisers have brains enough to draw up a proper marriage pact for her when she weds."

" But Mahomet insisted upon two particulars that buttress the rights of woman. First of all he made it the duty of the judge to satisfy himself that the cash consideration shall be reasonable with reference to the means of the husband and the social standing of the wife." And then he inaugurated a custom that only one half of this sum may be paid when the marriage is contracted. This means that, when a man is trying to win a woman, in other words when he is in a generous mood, he fixes the alimony he must pay her in case of divorce. As the establishment of this latter dole really involves a matter of the public policy, the judge is called upon to see that an adequate dower is stipulated. The half-cash plan protects the wife. Since a man rarely divorces a helpmate unless he has his weather-eye on another, the necessity of paying a brunette makes him stop before completely proving the " gentlemen prefer blonde."

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It is not lawful for a woman to have two or more husbands. She is obliged to observe an interval, called the *iddat*, between the termination by death or divorce of one matrimonial alliance and the commencement of another. It is lawful, however, for a man to have as many as four wives at a time, but no more.....

All of this seemed to me to create an unfair distinction in favour of man. Knowing my Sheikh's unflinching sense of fairness, I put the question to him plainly. His reply had as its abiding note the refrain: " Do not blame the Prophet, Allah has done all of this." " But," said I, " won't you be more specific? I cannot follow your reasoning." And then he looked around and lowered his voice. He seemed to hesitate. It was clear that some instinctive delicacy was clogging his speech. But my eyes pleaded with him, and one by one the

words came "The child has rights that prime those of mother", ran his argument. "It did not ask to come into the world. It is at least entitled to know who bore it and who begot it. Ploygamy gives an offspring every opportunity of identifying its father. Polyandry would not. How should you have the woman handle the questioning? You would surely not permit her one morning to summon her husbands before her and say: 'I am about to become a mother. Among yourselves please make a choice of a father. No, that cannot be done, because Allah has so decreed."

Of course, the answer to such reasoning is that true equality would allow a man but one wife. But I simply did not have the courage to advance such a reply. I knew that so erudite a Biblical student as Martin Luther had officially advised Philip of Hesse that the New Testament did not prohibit polygamy. I therefore felt it more prudent to keep my mouth shut. One never knows how much or how little an Oriental has fathomed of the Occident.....

But, when all is said and done, Mahomet's outstanding contribution to the cause of woman resides in the property rights that he conferred upon the wives of his people. The juridicial status of a wife, if so technical a term may be pardoned is exactly the same as that of a husband. The Muslim spouse in so far as her property is concerned, is as free as a bird. The law permits her to do with her financial assets whatever she pleases without consulting her consort. In such matters he has no greater rights than would have any perfect stranger. I have already spoken of my colleague's holding his wife's power of attorney. She could legally have given this mandate to Tom, Dick or Harry and the hands of her husband would have been tied. She acting in person or through any third party chosen by her, could sign away her property, put the sum accruing into her pocket or throw it away and laugh in the face of her spouse. A wife, technically speaking, does not even take her husband's name. A Muslim girl born *Aisha binte Omar* (Aisha, daughter of Omar) may marry ten times, but her

individuality is not absorbed by that of her various husbands. She is not a moon that shines through reflected light. She is a solar planet, with a name and legal personality of her own.

I must hasten to say that I am not discussing veils and habaras, harems and eunuchs, seraglios and disenchantment. Mahomet is my theme. I am writing of a man who died nearly thirteen hundred years ago, who made Islam bone-dry some eight centuries before wine-drinking Columbus discovered the land of unenforced prohibition and who gave a wife a legal identity at least one hundred and ten decades ere a single common law state got away from the principle that the very being of a wife is incorporated and consolidated in that of her husband. It is therefore useless to tell me that the Muslim woman is nothing but a human lacteal machine, that her soul is not her own and that man is her lord and master. I am not dealing with social conditions. I am drawing a picture of the work of a great legislator and of the legal edifice constructed by him. But, if I were pressed too hard, I should not fear to face the issue on this score of woman's effective power. I should begin by challenging the right of any man or woman to cast the first stone unless he or she could demonstrate that the wives of his or her state enjoy legal prerogatives which measure up to those of the hidden flowers of Islam. I think that I should be perfectly justified in applying such a rule. I am afraid that it would somewhat seriously restrict the quota of eligibles. But that is not my fault. I should then invite those who thus passed Ellis Island to come to my court. There I should probably be able to show them veiled sisters, with tattooed arms, rings in their noses, and fly covered children on their shoulders, without lawyer or friend, standing up before judge and counsel and defending their rights with an assurance, a volubility and a mastery that should be sure to arouse admiration. If this spectacle should still leave my inquirers unconvinced, I should ask them to find out, from somebody or through someone in whom they had confidence, just who first kindled in Egypt the spark that is now threatening England, who has kept the flame aglow and who are the blindest, the most fearless

and the most intractable foes to any form of compromise. To such a query there could be but one answer. It is that, for good or for evil, the Muslim woman is a driving force which was fashioned by a master mind. In a word, rights beget responsibility, responsibility engenders leadership and leadership always asserts itself. It was Mahomet who fixed with unerring discernment the property rights of the married woman of his land. It was he who gave them a legal personality of their own. He has thus put the sceptre within their grasp. His heir was a daughter. She has inherited the land.—*Asia.*

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INSURANCE AND ISLAM.

(To the Editor, the "Review of Religions.")

SIR,—It was a happy chance that placed in my hands the issue of the *Review of Religions* for August 1933, and it was with pleasant surprise that I noticed that in a magazine of this character a discussion has been raised on a subject of such importance to Mussalmans as Insurance.

It has not been my privilege to read M. S. M.'s article, but Mr. M. A. Hafiz's article is clear enough to give one a clear notion of what M. S. M. had said. Before I proceed further let me compliment Mr. Hafiz on a good grasp of the idea of insurance. Like a Mussalman he supported insurance on humanitarian grounds. He is correct when he says that an institution which helps to remedy the pitiable condition of the Mussalman widows cannot certainly be un-Islamic. And like a true Mussalman he fights shy of it as the mainstay of the finances of the insurance companies is interest. He has admirably summed up his arguments by saying that an insurance company is a co-operative interest-taking society which also renders help to the dependants of those of its members who die a premature death. Again, like a Mussalman of to-day he does not press the matter to its logical conclusion, but advises us to patiently bear the hardships of what he aptly calls the interest-ridden economic system of the modern world. This is stoic philosophy, not Islamic.

In these brief notes I will take up the story from the stage where he drops it. I take it that no Mussalman will raise any objection to an insurance company which will undertake to finance itself by methods other than of taking interest. If so, is there any reason to discard the benefits conferred by insurance if one can find sources of revenue permitted by Islam. To my mind Islamic cannons of financial propriety are not so narrow, or rigid, or unprogressive that they will not let the Mussalmans reap the benefits of provident schemes of the nature of insurance,

Is there no way to earn money except by taking interest? Are the Mussalmans so bankrupt of intelligence, integrity and ingenuity that they cannot make their money earn more money except by the lazy, indolent, and, let me add, inhuman method of lending it out on interest? One can ask numerous questions in the same strain, and unless the reply to all of them is in the negative the Mussalmans need not take into consideration any matters which affect their economic well being. Fortunately the picture is not so dark as it appears, and to change the metaphor, the dark cloud that hangs over the Moslem world has a silver lining.

With these preliminary remarks I will take up the case of an insurance company which is started with the sole object of earning its money by Islamic methods. For the sake of advancing concrete arguments I will place it in Lahore – the city which I know well. I will start from the stage when the board of directors meets to consider how to invest their money. Let me tell those who are not acquainted with Lahore that this city is in the throes of vast expansion, and that hosts of people—Government servants, pensioners and others are building their houses in its suburbs. Now suppose the directors decided to take up a plot of land in some good healthy locality and after effecting some improvements cut it up into plots and sell it at some profit, will this profit be un-Islamic? I anticipate the retort. This process cannot go on for an indefinite period. True. But Lahore is not the only town to which the company should confine its attention. Besides, instead of selling plots of land the company might start building houses on the plots and let them out on the hire purchase system—minus the interest of course, but plus the profit to cover not only the cost of material and labour but what is more the price of the enterprise and the intelligence behind the capital. In other words the company should take up the town improvement scheme, and there is no reason why it should not resolve itself into a town improvement trust.

Let us take another case. This company's directors decide

to try industrial enterprise. To say that the enconomic systems of the world are now in a state of collapse and that the industrial fabric of society is in the melting pot is not an argument for abandoning all industrial ventures altogether. Let us suppose for argument's sake that the industry started by this company has met with success. Is this money earned by an un-Islamic method.

Such cases can be multiplied *ad lib.* I will now take up a case on which I should like a Muslim scholar to throw some light. We know that our peasantry is terribly debt-ridden—thanks to the institution of interest. Can we do something to rid the men of this brand of helotry. To do so let directors of an insurance company decide to start operations, say in one district as an experiment. They confer with the peasants and both agree to take and make payments in kind rather than in cash, and the standard of this system of barter is so fixed that the debtor is made to feel that by entering into a bargain like this he is not losing his all. Some profits are likely to accrue to the company by this method. Are these un-Islamic? I have purposely refrained from making this last scheme more definite and detailed, and have thrown out tentative suggestions as the subject of sale and mortgage of agricultured land and produce of such land bristles with difficulties, but I do not despair of a fair and paying solution of the problem being arrived at if proper and pious consideration is given to it.

The problem before us is to find ways of earning money which Islam countenances and permits, and if such ways exist there is no valid reason for discarding the institution of insurance. Insurance may be the bastard son of bad parents—interest and usury—but is as much laible to be Islamized as any human being on the face of the earth. Let us Islamize it, that is, if we can, but if we are too indolent to do so, let us not cast stones at others' glass houses.

Yours Sincerely,

AHMAD SHAFI.

Lahore.

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DEATH OF THE HOLY PROPHET

In the tenth year of Flight and the 23rd of his ministry the Holy Prophet (may peace and the blessings of God be upon him !) died at Medina. A very chequered but a most successful career came to a close. He who was born as an orphan and had lived the major part of his life as a poor and oppressed individual persued by the relentless hatred of his enemies wherever he went, died as a most successful reformer, a powerful monarch, the ruler of the destinies of a community, conquerer of the hearts of a whole nation, feared by his enemies and revered and intensely loved by his friends and followers. The news of his death spread with the speed of lightening, throughout Arabia. The noblest of men was no more. The lord and master of Arabia was no more. The Founder of Islam, the Prophet of God, the beloved of the Muslims, the light of their eyes, the main prop of their lives was no more. The whole of Medina was plunged into deep grief. The feelings of the Muslims can better be imagined than described. He to protect whose person from the slightest injury the Muslims had given their lives and at the falling of whose sweat they had shed their blood was taken away from them by the cruel hand of death. What pen can adequately delineate the anguish which writhed the hearts of the Muslims ? It is no wonder then that even a master mind like Omar the Great, temporarily lost his mental equilibrium. Drawing his sword in the Prophet's Mosque he threatened to kill any one who would say that the Prophet was dead. He had only swooned, he said, and would rise again to exterminate all enemies of God. This was one of the most critical times in the history of Islam. In the excess of his love for the Prophet Omar had nearly laid the foundations of a false doctrine of the resurrection of the Prophet, if that noblest and the most faithful of his companions, Abu Bakr, the St. Peter of Islam, had not arrived at the scene. He saw Omar swelling and swearing and at once realized that his attitude was calculated to found a most erroneous belief. But he passed by him silently on to the chamber where the dead body of the Prophet lay. He kissed his forehead and with the words "God may not bring double death over Thee," he came back to the Mosque. Omar was yet unconsoled and his fury and grief had showed no sign of

abatement. Abu Bakr simply paid no heed to what he was doing and ascending the pulpit he addressed the vast concourse of people gathered in the Mosque in the words that have resounded down the centuries : "Let him who worships God know that God is ever living but he who worships Muhammad should beware that he is lying dead in the bed-chamber of Aisha," he said and with these words he gave a death blow to a most heinous and erroneous belief. Hearing these words Omar's sword fell from his hands and he realized that the Prophet was really dead. Abu Bakr's love for his Master was not at all less, but was actually more than Omar's love for him and it should not therefore be inferred from the cool and calculated manner in which he delivered his short speech that the Prophet's death had less grieved him than it did Omar. His love and regard and his jealousy for the honour of the Holy Prophet were indeed beyond measure but his jealousy for the Unity and Oneness of God was ever greater. This was the supreme lesson that he had learnt from the Prophet. This is the true significance of *Tauheed* which he himself had fully grasped and comprehended and had conveyed to the Muslims then listening to him and to the generations that were to come after, by his terse speech at the time of the Holy Prophet's death.

Thousands upon thousands of God's choicest blessings be upon the soul of Abu Bakr. The debt that the Muslims owe him is indeed very great for he saved them from falling into the quagmire of a filthy doctrine in the like of which the followers of another great Prophet of God have wallowed for 2,000 years.

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ATTAINMENT OF SPIRITUAL LIFE

By Mr. Khalid Singhawansa

Does there exist a conflict in the message of Islam? Does Islam offer a scheme for the spiritual uplift of man or is it a religion for his material advancement? These are the natural questions that perturb every thinking mind.

To reconcile spiritual life with the demands and needs of our physical, mundane and work-a-day existence has ever remained a stumbling block in the way of those who look upon life from a modern viewpoint. Instead of the religious life going hand in hand with the worldly life, they view each other with jealousy and hatred. The result is that the conventional beliefs of all religions have made this world either a place of sorrows or an illusion. Therefore it is believed that the object of man's existence in this life is to free himself from this life, and to achieve this end he has either to lead the life of a celibate or lead a life of complete isolation from this world.

The message of Islam in this respect was in conflict with the sophisticated world because for the first time Islam announced to the world that man must lead his mundane life in a manner so as to enable him to develop his natural faculties that may help him in his spiritual advancement. The spiritual life, according to Islam, does not begin all at once in man. It is, as a matter of fact, gradually unfolded by stages of development in man, as a result of the sublimation of all his passions.

To lead a spiritual life, it does not necessitate a man's retirement from this world of sensations and activity to a life of seclusion. It is the mundane life combined with human experiences gained by contact with other individuals that gives man a broader outlook of life and develop his spiritual life.

A life of isolation from the world of sensations and activity will deprive him of those factors that help him to render service to his fellow-beings.

The indifference of modern man to religious life lies in this direction. He finds religious life without worldly

experiences to be a great hinderance in the way of his serving his fellow-beings. It is, in fact, a meaningless thing to him, a make-belief of the traditional priestcraft which keeps him away from gaining the necessary knowledge to develop a spiritual life. That we are of this world and through worldly experiences we have to mould our characters and morals to lead a spiritual life is the great ideal that Islam offers to the world.

A life of celibacy, which is generally, though quite erroneously, considered to be a great incentive for the spiritual advancement of man, is an unnatural thing, because to repress the natural inclinations is to fly in the face of the laws of nature. A celibate can never be an ideal teacher or preacher for his fellow-beings. He has no practical experience of life, which is very essential for a teacher to possess to mould the characters of others. Mere homilies and sermons may appeal to sentimental persons but cannot be of any practical use to them because of their lives being vastly different from him.

The injunction of the Prophet of Islam is very clear on this point. He has said, "None of my followers is to remain celibate except when he cannot help." This shows the importance of matrimony in the life of man. It is in a married life that man can regulate his passions and natural inclinations in order to prepare himself for a spiritual life. Where else can man gain better experiences and can have more opportunities for the realization of God and service to his fellow-beings, than in his domestic life? Another advantage of matrimony is that it co-ordinates and harmonizes all the inherent qualities of man.

The ideals of Islam have generally been misunderstood. Some people think Islam to be merely a worldly religion because they think it encourages the proper satisfaction of natural passions. Others wrongly believe it to be only a fatalistic religion. It is neither of these. Islam means to a Muslim a "way" to perfection through successive stages of progress from the material to the spiritual life. It may be called a materio-spiritual religion—a religion that looks to the physical as well as moral and spiritual needs of man and seeks to develop his spiritual life through a proper regulation of his physical and mundane life.

AHMADIYYA MOVEMENT IN FOREIGN LANDS

London

Maulvi Muhammad Yar Arif, Secretary and Assistant Imam of the London Mosque in his letter, dated 20th July, 1933, writes :—" Last month many meetings were held in the Mosque. On July 1st, seventy-five members of a religious society came to see the Mosque and to add to their knowledge about Islam and the Ahmadiyya Movement, by hearing our views. Maulvi Abdur Rahim Dard, M. A., delivered before them a long and interesting speech in which he explained fully and convincingly the fundamental tenets, precepts and practices of Islam and established their superiority over Christian teachings. The speech was listened to with rapt and reverent attention and at its end questions for the elucidation of certain points were put and answered. These gentlemen went pleased and satisfied with their visit and promised to come again. Next day Dr. Zia-ud-Din Ahmad, C. I E., M. L. A., and Maulvi Sir Muhammad Yaqub, M. L. A., gave speeches on Islam. They were very much pleased to see and talk to our new brothers-in-Islam. The Doctor Sahib was especially pleased to hear the new converts recite the Holy Quran. On a Sunday Sir Akbar Haidri and Lady Haidri visited the Mosque. Chaudhri Zafarullah Khan and Mr. Dard welcomed them in brief speeches. On July 16, Dr. Khalifa Shuja-ud-Din delivered an interesting lecture in the Mosque in which he explained the reasons and causes that led to the rapid spread of Islam in its early stages. On the following Sunday Dr. Omar Sulaiman spoke on "The Principles of Islam." During the time under review I delivered three lectures on ' Islam ' and ' The Holy Prophet', etc.

In his latest letter Maulvi A. R. Dard, M.A., Imam of

London Mosque writes :—"You will be pleased to learn that Chaudhri Zafarullah Khan is going to Canada to take part on behalf of the British Government in British Commonwealth Relations Conference to be held in Toronto, Canada. The Chaudhri Sahib will, during his sojourn in Canada, make a short tour of the United States of America. He has been in England for the last three months and in addition to his duties as a member of the Joint Select Committee which he has discharged and will continue to discharge faithfully and effectively he has never ignored to advance the cause of Islam whenever he had an opportunity to do so. During this time he has delivered four very learned speeches in the Mosque in which he has explained in a lucid, clear and simple way almost all the different aspects of the teachings of Islam. Some days back "The National League" arranged some lectures on Islam to be delivered before the members of Parliament. His Highness the Agha Khan, Maulvi Sir Muhammad Yaqub and some other distinguished Muslims spoke. But by common consent Chaudri Zafarullah Khan's speech was the most comprehensive and interesting to which an Arabic paper of Yafa (Palestine) has paid a flowing tribute. The Chaudhri Sahib has on different occasions seen the Secretary of State for India and the Secretary for Dominions and the officials concerned in connection with the complaints and grievances of the Muslims of Palestine. He intends to make a tour of the principal Islamic countries on his way back to India. Chaudri Zafarullah Khah takes particular care to see those who wish to meet him at the Mosque, and in this way makes known the existence and purpose of the Ahmadiyya Mission in England in circles which are not already familiar with it. When he comes back from Canada, the Chaudri Sahib intends to take all the new converts on a pleasure trip at his own expense and seeks thus to establish closer and more familiar relations with them."

Palestine, Syria and Egypt

Maulvi Abul-Ata Allah Ditta in his letter published in the *Alfazl* of 10th August 1933, writes about his

activities as follows :—"After I wrote the last report 127 persons have been approached individually and to them has been explained the Message of Ahmad. Most of these came to see me at our head quarters in Haifa. The Ahmadies of Egypt, Haifa, Kababir, Damascus and Hims also took an effective part in preaching and helping me in my work. Regular controversies were held. The first was with a Bahai on 'whether according to the Bible Jesus was a law-bearing Prophet.' The Bahai gentleman could not prove his asserted claim that Jesus was such a Prophet and had to eat the humble pie before a gathering of about thirty distinguished persons The second controversy was with an orthodox Muslim Maulvi on the 'death of Jesus Christ.' The third gentleman with whom I had a formal talk before a select gathering was a Maulvi from Egypt named Muhammad Attai Jani on 'whether prophethood had terminated with the Holy Prophet,' and the fourth controversy held in Haifa was with a German priest named Bernafa who is attached to the Haifa Christian Mission The subjects under dispute were (*a*) whether Jesus alone was sinless, (*b*) God-head of Jesus and (*c*) Jesus' death on the Cross. The controversy on the first question lasted for three hours at the end of which the Rev. Bernaba's companion, Rev. Alexander, admitted his friend's complete inability to answer my questions and criticisms. About 90 persons participated in the controversy, most of them non-Ahmadies who were extremely pleased at our great success. The Rev. Bernaba was so completely discomfited that he flatly refused to continue the controversy on the other two subjects. Three meetings are held every week in Haifa and two in Kababir."

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In his letter from Haifa, dated 7th July, Maulvi Abul-Ata writes:—A few weeks ago I went to see Mr. Shoghi Effendi, the leader of the Bahais and Abdul Baha's grandson, in company with a friend. We had a talk for about an hour in which Mr. Shoghi Effendi said that Bahaism's claim on the allegiance of mankind was its message of unity and human brotherhood. 'This message was given to the world by the Holy

Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of God be upon him) 1,400 years ago', said I. I challenged him to produce anything from his religious scriptures which was not to be found in a completer form in the Quran. On July 15, I went to Ekka and after paying a visit to Bahaullah's tomb I saw Muhammad Ali, Bahaullah's second son and Abdul Baha's younger brother, a disgruntled and disillusioned old man. He claims to be the only true leader of the Bahais. He disputes and denies the legality of Shoghi Effendi's leadership. He stigmatizes it as an usurpation of a true right. I talked with him for about two hours on all sorts of subjects. He flatly refused to believe that Bahaism would be the future religion of the world. He, in fact, hinted that religion stood in the way of the establishment of peace on earth. He promised to come to see me at my place. In Hims Brother Sayyad Muhammad Ibrahim's efforts to spread the message of Abmadiyyat are indeed very praiseworthy. Ahmadies of Egypt hold their weekly meetings regularly. It is to be sincerely regretted that Sheikh Mahmud Ahmad left us on July 14. He leaves behind him a beautiful record of a great work sincerely, assiduously and selflessly done. Though he was not a regular missionary, yet he never let any opportunity miss in which he did not advance the cause of Islam and Admadiyyat if he possibly could do so. During the period under review we welcomed in Ahmad's fold three persons: (1) Brother Sayyad Mohyi-ud-Din Effendi Alhasni, elder brother of our dear and devoted friend Sayyad Munir Effendi, (2) Sayyadah Ayesha and (3) Sheikh Ali Alqazq".

In his letter of 7th August Maulana Abul Ata writes :— "After the last report five more gentlemen have joined Ahmad's fold. They are Mahmud Murad Effendi Fehmi, Muhammad Effendi, Sayyad Muhammad Abdur Rahman Effendi Ahmad, Sayyad Muhammad Sullaiman Effendi and Muhammad Musleh Effendi Ulyan. All these youngmen are from Cairo and all are educated. During the last few days our affairs have been particularly pleasing. I paid a visit to Jerusalem and turned it to good account. In Haifa tracts have been published, speeches made and private visits paid to respectable persons. A

controversy is proposed to take place with one Sh. Abdur Rauf on different topics. The first controversy on 'Jehad' has already taken place. Needless to say, by the grace of God the gentleman proved himself to be a very poor exponent of his views. Our brother Sheikh Abdur Rahman of Barjava went round five villages preaching and teaching. A tract entitled "Twenty questions for Christian Missionaries to answer" has been published and also has been published a tract in Hebrew for the Jews. It is, perhaps, the first tract of its kind written for the Jews in their religious language. May success attend our efforts !

America

Dr. Muhammad Yusuf Khan writes in his latest letter:— "In Cleveland four lectures were given in the Ahmadiyya Lecture Hall. The Hall was full to its utmost capacity on every occasion. In the last few weeks we have conveyed the message of Islam to thousands of Americans. Strangely enough some Turks and Arabs have recently opposed our activities perhaps because their own people have begun to become Ahmadies. Since I wrote last 26 persons have joined the Movement. Sheikh Nasir Ahmad and Sheikh Muhammad Omur who were formerly Christian priests are working very zealously for the cause of Islam. In this town the number of Ahmadies has reached the respectable figure of 300.

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NOTES AND COMMENTS

Ravages of Dance

Promiscuous dancing in which men and women freely take part is very much in vogue in the West and is becoming increasingly popular among those so-called cultured people in the East with whom the imitation and copying of every western thing has become, as it were, a matter of faith. But, fortunately, the leaders of religious thought in the West have become fully alive to the moral ruin and wreck to which those who freely indulge in this unnatural form of physical exercise expose themselves. Dr. Phillip Yarrow, D. D., Superintendent of Illinois (U. S. America) Vigilance Association, is a very severe critic of the ways in which people in Europe and America enjoy themselves. In the Press and on the Platform he has carried on a relentless war against theatres, cabarets Jazz music, public dance halls, vicious magazines and pictures, stag parties, etc. In quite naked language he describes the moral dangers of dancing. He says:

> It may be that a fossilized octogenarian, or a self-complacent mollycoddle with ice-water in his veins, or a dandified dude, or a society sissy, or a pleasure-cloyed Don Juan, or a vitiated fop, who does not know whether he is a man or a woman—such a character as one of these, I say, may be able in the dance to hold in his arms a throbbing, beautiful young woman, with about half of her body exposed—and the other half clothed largely with good intentions!—such a man may be able to hold a girl under such circumstances and still maintain a philosophical calm, and experience only saintly emotions, and have nothing stronger than Sunday School maxims running thought his mind, but I do not believe that any real man, any youth with red blood in his veins and with the elemental forces of nature operating in him, could pass through such an experience without the natural reaction which heredity and every masculine instinct demands from such conditions.
>
> When a man tells me that he can put his arm around a radiant woman and draw her body to his own, with her red cheek against his cheek, and her breasts pressed to his bosom, and her limbs intertwined with his, and the aroma of her hair in his nostrils, and the sparkle of her eye close to his

own—when a man tells me that he can take such a position as that, and then go swinging across the dance room floor in rhythmic motion, and still say that he has no improper thoughts, and that his God-given procreative powers are not unduly excited, then I say to him: "I do not dispute you. I do not question your veracity or your morals, neither do I look to see if angels' wings are sprouting under your coat. I simply say, God pity you, my friend, you are not a man!—and of all the creatures of God's green earth most deserving of pity, it is that creature who has the form and fashion of manhood, but who has not the mighty powers of his sex!"

Ah, my friends, when we stop to think clearly and frankly about these matters, how utterly absurd is the assertion that there is "no harm in the dance!" The Bible teaches that God made them male and female, giving to each sex its appropriate and necessary powers; and the long experience of the race has developed certain social customs through which the sexes are to find their mates. And these are not ugly relationships, but they are beautiful and holy, when they move along the lines that a God of love has laid down. But the Heavenly Father never designed or expected any such abnormal and unwholesome stirring of the passions as the modern dance makes inevitable.

These things are not necessary to women for them to secure their mates. With our imperious passions, we need rather constraint and the cultivation of control; and the dance of to-day is destructive of those barriers of maidenly modesty and womanly reserve, on the one side, and those reins of masculine restraint on the other, which alone guarantee the moral integrity of the race.

Rights of Muslim Women

We are glad that misunderstandings about the teachings of Islam, especially about the position and status it gives to women, are fast disappearing. It was, perhaps, in regard to the social position Islam was supposed to give to women that it was maligned most and it is particularly in regard to this very question that Islamic teaching has begun to be properly understood and appreciated. Even Muslim women have begun to realize that Islam gives them a status much higher than that their men, under the baneful influences of customs borrowed from a neighbouring community in India, have so far given them. Mrs. Latifi, wife of the Commissioner of Lahore, a few days ago, gave a lecture at the Y. M. C. A., Simla on "the Present Position and Aspirations of the Muslim women of India."

The lecture shows a true appreciation of the teachings of Islam about the rights of women. It constitutes a crushing reply to those who think or pretend to think that Islam gives women a degraded position. In the course of her address, Mrs. Latifi said :

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"Turning to the question of marriage and the question of divorce, it is well-known that the Moslem marriage is a contract, but it is not equally well-known that the position of a Moslem woman in this contrast is not one of inferiority. Here, as elsewhere, Islam recognizes that woman, as compared with man, has equality of status, though not always an equality of functions. This is a very important distinction. Even among men themselves there can be an equality of status but not always an equality of functions.

It is true that the Moslem law gives to a man the unrestricted right to diverce his wife at any time without giving any reason, but this seemingly unrestricted right is limited by the obligation of giving the woman such *mehr* or *dower* as may have been agreed upon in the marriage contract. It is open to the woman and her advisers to insert in the marriage contract terms so onerous that they would make this right illusory. It is also open for the woman to insert in the marriage contract a right of divorce as wide as that possessed by the man. I will admit that in practice the law is much misunderstood and even much abused, perhaps more so in India than in other countries. The cure lies in the education of the women.

Then there is the question of inheritance. Here again you see an illustration of the Islamic doctrine of equality. The law gives all the children of a man an equal status to succeed to his inheritance. The sons as between themselves and the daughters as between themselves must be treated with absolute equality. It is not permitted to a man to give more to one child than to other. A daughter, however, gets a half share to the sons's whole share. This differenciation is due to the difference of function recognized by Islam between man and woman. A woman is given a half share of her father's inheritance as against her brother's whole share, but in lieu of this she is given the rights of *dower* and of maintenance as against her husband which are regarded as more suitable in view of her function in the social economy. I admit that the Islamic law of inheritance does not universally govern the Moslems of India. A large part of the Moslems of the Punjab, for example, have what is called customary law, inherited in most cases from their Hindu ancestors, which gives women hardly any rights of inheritance. I have no doubt that in a few years, the Moslem woman of the Punjab will get the rights that are theirs in accordance with rules of the *Shariat*.

Modern Woman Criticised

A debate was arranged the other day at their club house by the Punjab Literary League (Lahore).

The subject of the debate was "the modern woman is less human than her predecessor of the last generation."

Professor D. C. Sharma criticised modern woman very severely. He said that under the stress and strain of the modern age, woman had become the competitor of man and had ceased to be man's true companion. The chief domain of woman, which was her home, had now ceased to be so regarded. The modern women were like so many pretty dolls. The home was neglected and family life has deteriorated. The modern woman had spoilt home life, for she lacked love, affection and sympathy, which were her real qualities. Professor H. C. Sehgal maintained that while women of the last generation were brave and strong in their family affection, the modern woman was kind and affectionate to dogs and kittens. She was less interested in her husband, home and children. Mr. J. R. Agnitir, Barrister, was of opinion that the modern woman was a liability rather than an asset. If competition between men and women continued at the present rate, a time would come when their might be a war between the sexes.

Dr. R. D. Sharry defended modern woman. She said that modern woman was more well-informed, educated, brave, and plucky. She was a full-blooded companion, a good mother, a teacher, a nurse and a true friend to her children. She was jollier, and her children were happier. Mrs. S. J. Abdul Karim seconded Dr. Sherry. She was of opinion that the modern woman was a more efficient mother, a kindlier wife and a more dutiful daughter than her predecessor. She was sincerely devoted to her husband. The modern woman had made the home a sweet home. She brightened and cheered the husband in his moments of despair. She was neither extravagent nor unreasonable.

We think truth is more on the side of the modern woman's critics than her defenders. She may be anything or everything but it is not quite true to say that the modern woman is a better mother, better wife and a better daughter than her predecessor.

The modern woman has really neglected her chief domain—her home. The leaders of the Muslim community in India should see that Muslim girls combine in their characters all the good points of the modern woman with those of her predecessor.

Hitler and the Jews

The question of the persecution of the Jews by Hitler has resumed a world-wide importance and protest meetings have been held in many western countries against Hitler's ruthless policy. Even boycott of German goods has been threatened in some quarters. But undaunted by these protest meetings and threats of boycott, Hitler continues to harry and harass the Jews with unabated fury and violence. It seems incredible that the Head of a civilized State in the 20th century should persecute a people simply because they possess a different religion from the mass of his countrymen. The persecution of the Jews by Hitler is as much a religious question as a political one. It is necessary for those who study and take interest in the world's religious problems that they should try to read and understand Hitler's mind in regard to the Jews, their culture, religion, traditions, etc. Hitler has described in his famous book *Mein Kampf* (My Struggle) the causes that have led him to acquire an intense dislike for the Jews They may be summarized as follows : —

1. The Jewish doctrine of Marxism militates against the importance of nationality and race.

2. The instinct of self-preservation is so strongly developed among the Jews as to prevent them from merging into a people with which their destinities seem to be linked for ever. They remain as a distinct race culturally in whatever country they live. They, as it were, form a nation among a nation.

3. The Jews, in fact, never possessed a culture of their own, the bases of their intellectual activity have always been supplied by others.

4. The Jews were ever a parasite in the bodies of other nations. In order to continue existing as a parasite within the nation they must dissemble to deny their real inner nature thus to deceive the French, the British, or the Germans, as the case may be, that they are one of them completely and thoroughly though of a different religion.

5. The Jews are endeavouring and have almost succeeded

in their efforts to acquire control of the trades union movement for the purpose of destroying national economic independence.

6. The German collapse in 1918 was due not to the defeats which the German armies sustained but to the German nation being deprived of all political and moral instinct and strength by schemes which were working for decades.

If Her Hitler's picture of the Jews is a true one, they deserve a severer treatment than that meted out to them. Whatever may be the apparent and immediate cause of what horrible tyrannies the Jews have suffered during the ages, the real cause is the curse that fell upon them from the lips of God's two great Prophets—Jesus and David. That curse have all along dogged their foot-steps.

Formalism carried too far

The question whether Buddhist priests may change their robes for a lay costume without loss of status will be decided by a special tribunal of members of the Buddhist hierarchy and laity which will sit at Kandy on September 9. The point has been raised as the result of the action of the Reverend Pannasara, a Buddhist prist, who was sent on a mission to England. During the winter he temporarily forsook his robes for a suit of European clothes, his explanation of his action being that the climate necessitated warmer clothing.

At a meeting of the All-Ceylon Congress Buddhist Associations, where the matter was discussed, it was held that once a priest disrobed himself, he lost his status. He would have to be ordained again in order to be entitled to claim the rights and privileges, and to fulfil the duties of a member of the order.

We think this is carrying formalism too far. If the priest or religious head who prescribed the present form of dress of the Buddhist monks knew that his followers, emulating the example set by Muslim missionaries, would in the first quarter of the 20th century aspire to preach their antiquated doctrines to the West, the rules laid down by him for monks to observe regarding their dress, would have been very vastly different from the present ones. A religion which only particular class of people wearing a particular dress can preach clearly has no future. Islam knows no priesthood. Every Muslim is a preacher and a

priest and he can preach his religion in any decent dress he likes.

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Fascists in Holy Land

Reuter tells us that the Nazi policy of a racial "Spring-cleaning" has been adopted by a group of Young Christian Arabs of Bethlehem and Beit-Jallah. This group of young men is now engaged upon plans for forming a Fascist Party in Palestine. Their ultranationalistic policy does not now, nor ever, envisage the exclusion of Muslims from a political alliance. The part of Hitler's governmental policy that appeals to them most is that dealing with anti-Jewish measures. One of the youth leaders, speaking recently at a rally of the budding Oriental Fascists at Bethlehem, declared that they wanted "a clean Palestine," rid of the Jewish population. He said he admired the Nazi anti-Jewish acts because they were directed at exorcizing a real evil. Such acts ought to be enforced in Palestine, he proclaimed, as the menace of Jewish domination in all spheres there was greater than in Germany.

We have always doubted the wisdom of the Balfour Declaration which sought to establish a National Home for the Jews in Palestine which was already a National Home of the Arabs who are diametrically opposed to the Jews in sentiments and traditions. Apart from the fact that this Declaration was looked upon as an anti-Muslim act of the British Government by the entire Muslim world it brought no substantial gain to the Jewish community. But we cannot view with favour the formation of parties on the lines and having aims and objects identical to those of the Nazi Party in Germany. You cannot kill a people by persecution. The blood of the martyr has always proved to be the seed of the church. Moreover, as very wisely hinted by an Arabic daily, the main effect of the Nazi Government's attitude to the Jews has been to revise Jewish interest in the Zionist settlement of Palestine, in stimulating fund-raising among Jews, and thus in helping the materialization of the Jewish National Home project.

NOTES ON THE HOLY QURAN

قل من كان عدوا لجبريل فانه نزله على قلبك باذن الله مصدقاً لما بين يديه وهدى وبشرى للمومنين۔

98. Qul, man kāna 'aduwwalli-Jibrīla, fa-inna-hū-nazzala-hū 'alā qalbi-ka-bi-idhnillāhi, muṣaddiqal-limā baina yadāi hi, wa hudan-wa bushrā lil-mu'minīn.

98. Say, whoso is an enemy to Gabriel—for surely he has caused it to descend on thy heart by the command of Allah, verifying that which preceded it, and a guidance and glad tidings to the faithful.

96. The Jews had been invited to believe in the Holy Qur-ān (*vide* verse 92), but they refused to accept it on the ground that it was said to have been brought by Gabriel, while, according to them, the bearer of divine revelation was Michael, and not Gabriel. جبرائيل (Gabriel) means "a good and brave servant of the acceptor of repentance', and is the name given to one of the angels of God whose business, as we learn from the Bible, is to convey the messages of God to His servants. This is clear from Daniel VIII, 16; IX, 21; and Luke I, 19, 26. The Holy Qur-ān assigns the same function to Gabriel. But in some later writings of the Jews, he is described as "the angel of fire and thunder". This is clear from the later Targums. Such was the idea of the Jews in the days of the Holy Prophet, (may peace and blessings of God be upon him!) (*vide Encyclopædia Biblica* under Gabriel). Islamic books on history show that this idea had such a firm hold on the minds of the Jews that when they were told that the bearer of the Quranic revelations was the angel Gabriel, they said :

جبرائيل ذالك الذي ينزل بالحرب والقتال. والعذاب علينا۔

i.e. " Gabriel is the angel who is associated with war and bloodshed and punishment." By saying this, they meant

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that they would not believe in a revelation brought by Gabriel. (*Vide* Musnad of Ahmad Hambal). The reason why the Jews bore enmity to Gabriel seems to be that they had fallen on evil days and as, according to them, Gabriel was the angel of war, fighting and punishment, therefore they ascribed their misfortunes to him. There is no doubt that the Talmudic traditions and the Targums were the origin of this notion which gained such a firm footing among the Jews; for, as a matter of fact, the Bible declares Gabriel as the angel of good tidings and of the divine word. It is evident that through length of time legends and myths grew round the original truth which was subsequently lost; and the Jews clung fast to their erroneous belief, which stood in their way of accepting the fresh revelation through the agency of Gabriel.

The Holy Qur-an has brought forward, in the verse under comment, four arguments in refutation of the above Jewish plea for rejecting the Holy Qur-ān: *First*, no angel can bring down revelation unless he receives direct orders from God. Hence, the angel, whether he is Gabriel, Michael, or any other, is only the vehicle of the divine word; and if some body, misled by traditional bias, does not think well of the angel, there is no reason why he should question the authority from which it proceeds. *Secondly*, in the revelations sent to the Holy Prophet (on whom be peace and blessings of God), all the prophecies about the promised Law-giver contained in the previous scriptures find their fulfilment. Thirdly, when it is demonstrated that the teachings of the Holy Qur-ān are noble and edifying, its acceptance becomes binding upon all right-thinking men. *Lastly*, it is added that the Holy Qur-ān contains teachings which, besides being right, are highly beneficial for man's spiritual and social life and bear glad tidings to its followers. Such revelations should not be rejected for the only reason that they have been brought down by Gabriel.

من كان عدوا لله وملئكة ورسله وجبريل وميكل فان الله عدو للكفرين-

99. Man kāna 'aduwwal-lillāhi wa malā'ikati- hī wa,

rusuli-hi wa Jibrīla wa Mīkāla fa innallāha 'aduwwul-lil-kāfirīn.

99. Whoso is an enemy to Allah and His angels, and His Messengers, and Gabriel and Michael, then surely Allah is an enemy to the disbelievers.

97. As an insult to a king's agent implies insult to the king himself, so those who speak unworthy things about any of the angels really find fault with God. The Holy Qur-ān, therefore, declares that these words of the Jews imply irreverence to God and opposition to His will, such as only an enemy of God could show. It is evident that one who opposes the will of God sets himself against all the angels and the prophets, because they all are the servants of God. Thus, one who breaks even one link of the spiritual chain or manifests ill-will against any single unit of the spiritual system severs his connection with the whole system. And the result is that such a man deprives himself of the favours and blessings which are bestowed upon the friends of God and renders himself deserving of the punishment fixed for the transgressors.

In this verse a brief mention of God and the angels and the prophets generally is followed by a specific mention of Gabriel and Michael. The reason is not far to seek. The Jews regarded Gabriel as their foe. It is therefore particularly pointed out that enmity with Gabriel merited divine punishment. The name of Michael is also mentioned along with Gabriel's so that no Muslim might take it into his head to retort Jewish envy against Gabriel by speaking ill of Michael.

ولقد انزلنا اليک آيت بينت۔ وما يكفرون بها الا الفسقون۔

100. Wa la-qad anzalnā ilaika āyātim-baiyyināt, wa mā yakfuru bi-hā illal-fāsiqūn.

100. And surely We have sent down to thee manifest signs, and none will disbelieve them but the rebellious.

98. The Holy Qur-ān continues that the denial of the

Holy Prophet (on whom be peace and blessings of God!) by the Jews (and other disbelievers) is quite unreasonable, because his claim is grounded on convincing arguments and manifest signs. This verse gives the lie to those who assert that, according to the Holy Qur-ān, the Prophet of Islam showed no signs. That the Holy Prophet (on whom be peace and blessings of God!) did claim to have shown signs is borne out by the words of the Holy Qur-ān and cannot be doubted. The word آيات بينات (manifest signs) refers to all those signs which God showed to prove the truth of the Holy Prophet. The greatest of those signs is the matchlessness of the Holy Qur-ān. فسقون (The rebellious) means "those who have taken upon themselves to observe what the law orders and have acknowledged its authority, and then go against it" (Lane's Lexicon).

أو كلما عهدو اعهداً نبذه فريق منهم بل اكثر هم لايؤمنون۔

ولما جاءهم رسول من عندالله مصدق لما معهم نبذ فريق من الذين أو توا الكتاب كتب الله وراء ظهورهم كانهم لا يعلمون۔

101. A-wa kullama 'āhadū 'āhdan, nabadha-hū farīqum-min-hum? Bal aktharu-hum lā yu'minūn.

102. Wa lammā jā'a-hum rasūlum-min 'indillāhi muṣaddiqul-li-mā ma'a-hum nabadha farīqum-mīnal-ladhīna ūtul-kitāba kitāballāhi warā'a zuhūri-him ka anna-hum lā ya' lamūn.

101. What! every time they make a covenant, will some of them repudiate it? Nay, most of them believe not.

102. And when there came to them from Allah a messenger, verifying that which was with them, a section of those to whom the book was given cast the book of Allah behind their back, as though they knew not.

99. The Jews had promised their prophets to accept the Prophet who was to appear from among the brethren of the Israelites, but although all the conditions detailed in the prophecies concerning the Promised One had been

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fulfilled, yet they persisted in their denial and thus belied their own scriptures.

The word مصدق *Muṣaddiq* has been construed to mean (1) that the Holy Qur-ān declares the Bible to be true and (2) that it fulfils the prophecies contained in the Bible. Now, as a result of this, the people of the Book are spoken of as casting the Book of God (the Torah) behind their backs. This cannot be the case, if we follow the first meaning ascribed to the word مصدق *Muṣaddiq*, for if the Holy Qur-ān declared the Bible to be true, this could not be the cause of the Jews casting their own Book behind their backs. Evidently, the correct meaning is that the Holy Qur-ān fulfils the prophecies contained in the Bible, yet the Jews have rejected it, and have thereby cast their own Book behind their backs.

The verse shows that a class of men knowing that the Holy Prophet (on whom be peace and blessings of God!) fulfilled in himself all the prophecies contained in their scriptures did not still accept him, and thus set aside the commandments of God as if they had no knowledge thereof.

واتبعوا ماتتلوا الشيطين على ملك سليمان۔ وماكفر سليمن ولكن الشيطين كفروا يعلمون الناس السحر۔ وما أنزل على الملكين ببابل هاروت وماروت۔ وما يعلمن من احد حتى يقولا انما نحن فتنة فلا تكفر۔ فيتعلمون منهما ما يفرقون به بين المرء وزوجه۔ وماهم بضارين به من احه الا باذن الله۔ ويتعلمون ما يضرهم ولا ينفعهم۔ ولقد علموا لمن اشتراه ماله فى الاخرة من خلاق۔ ولبئس ماشروا به انفسهم۔ لو كانوا يعلمون۔

ولو انهم آمنوا واتقوا لمثوبة من عند الله خير۔ لو كانوا يعلمون۔

103. Wattaba'ū mā tatlush-shayātīnu 'alā mulki Sulaimān, wa mā kafara Sulimānu; wa lakin-nashshayātīna kafarū yū 'allimū-nannāsas-siḥra; wa mā unzila 'alal-malakaini bi-Bābila, Hārūta wa Mārūt; wa mā yu'allimāni min aḥadin, ḥattā yaqulā inna mā naḥnu fitnatun, fa lā takfur; fa-yata'allamūna min-humā mā yufarriqūna bi hī bainalmar'i wa zaujih; wa mā hum bi-ḍarrīna bi-hī min aḥadin, illā bi idhnillāh; wa yata'allamūna mā yaḍurruhum wa lā yanfa'uhum; wa la qad 'alimū la-manishtarāhu mā la-hū fil ākhirati

min khalāq; wa la-bi'sa mashtarau bi-hī anfusa-hum; lau kanū ya'lamūn.

104. Wa lau anna-hum āmanū wattaqau, lamathūbatum-min 'indillāhi khair, lau kānū ya'lamūn.

103. And they follow what the rebellious men followed during the reign of Solomon; and Solomon disbelieved not, but it was the rebellious men who disbelieved: they taught men deceitful things, and they follow what was sent down to the two angels, Hārūt and Mārūt, at Babylon. And these taught no one until they had said, 'We are but a trial from God; do not, therefore, disbelieve'. So men learnt from them that by which they made a distinction between man and his companion; but they harmed no one thereby, except by the command of Allah: whereas these people learn what would harm them and bring them no profit, and certainly they have known that he who purchased it should have no portion in the future life; and surely vile is that for which they have sold their souls, had they but known!

104. And if they had believed and been God-fearing, better surely would have been the reward from Allah; had they but known.

100. *Meanings of important words*:—

تلا *talā*—'followed'. *Vide* Lane's Lexicon, p. 313.

شياطين *Shayāṭīn* (Sing. Shaiṭān)—"rebellious men". (Lane's Lexicon, p. 1552.)

على *'ala* (during)—فى *fī* (in the time of) *vide* Mughni p. 117 (first edition).

ملك *Mulk* (reign)—'rule' or 'sovereignty' (*vide* Lane's Lexicon, p. 3023).

Thus على ملك سليمان *'alā mulki Sulaimāna* means "In the time of Solomon's sovereignty or during the reign of Solomon."

سحر *Siḥr* (deceitful things) means "producing what is

false in the form of truth; any event of which the cause is hidden and which is imagined to be different from what it really is ; an embellishment by falsification and deceit" (*vide* Lane's Lexicon). Thus every falsehood, deceit or sign which is meant only to hide the real object from public is included in the meaning of *sihr*.

Malak literally means "angel," but figuratively, it can be used to denote a handsome or holy person, as we read in Ch. XII, 32:—(يوسف) إن هذا إلا ملك كريم "He (*Joseph*) is no other than a gracious angel (*malak*)". As in the verse under comment, the two angels are described as teaching something to the people, therefore, the word cannot be taken in its literal significance, because angels do not generally have free intercourse with human beings, as we learn from vv. 95, 96 of Ch. XVII which run thus:—"And nothing has hindered men from believing when the guidance has come to them save that they said, what! has Allah sent a mortal as a messenger?" Say, "Had there been on the earth angels walking at ease, We should have surely sent down to them from heaven an angel as a messenger"; that is to say, when the earth is peopled by human beings, then no other being but a man must come as a messenger. Similarly, the Holy Qur-ān says elsewhere: "We have not sent before thee but men to whom we spoke by revelation" (XXI, 8). These verses show that angels are not sent to men so as to live among them and teach them anything. As in the verse under comment, these two beings are stated to have been living in the world and teaching people, therefore, the word *malak* cannot be here taken to convey any other meaning. هاروت *Hārūt* and *Mārūt* are both descriptive names. *Hārūt* comes from *harut* which means 'to tear' hence *Hārūt* means 'the tearer' (*Tajul Arūs*, vol. I). *Mārūt* is derived from the root *marūt* which means 'to break', and thus *Mārūt* means 'the breaker' (*Tajul 'Arūs*, vol. I.) These two names signify that the object of the appearence of these prophets was also to 'tear'

asunder and 'break' the glory and power of certain classes of people.

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فتنة *fitnah* rendered as 'trial' means "the trial whereby the condition of a man may be evinced or a means whereby the condition of a man is evinced in respect of good or evil" (Lane's Lexicon, Part VI).

Explanation of the verse:—Many a lenged absolutely unwarranted by, or rather, running counter to, the Holy Qur-ān and the reliable traditions clusters round this verse. It is evidently quite unreasonable to interpret this verse on the basis of those myths. For the right interpretation of the verse, no external evidence is needed (much less those fairy tales), the words being self-explanatory. It is clear from the verse itself that the Jews were bent upon the same mischief which characterised them in the days of Solomon and during the captivity in Babylon. The verse further indicates that the mischief-mongers of Solomon's time were those 'rebellious men' who called him an unbeliever. God says that not Solomon but those men themselves were unbelievers. Again, the verse informs us that they taught to their associates such signs as conveyed to them meanings quite different from their generally accepted import, for the purpose of deceiving other people and concealing their activities. All this leads to the conclusion that this verse alludes to those secret plots which the enemies of Solomon were making aganist him, and by which they wished to break down his empire. It is also pointed out that in the days of the Holy Prophet (on whom be peace and blessings of God) those people were resorting to the self-same tactics, but they would fail. As the verse refers to a number of historical events, it appears to be advisable to relate them here at some length.

When the Jews saw that the Muslim empire was steadily expanding and that no opposition at the hands

of the Arabs had been able to arrest, their progress, they began to excite the outsiders against them. At that time there were two large empires in the neighbourhood of Arabia:—(1) The Byzantine or Eastern Roman Empire; (2) The Persian Empire. As the Jews were already at enmity with the Roman Government, because they were in constant trouble under it, so it was only the Persian Government to which they could look for support; and with which they were on good terms also. Harassed by the oppression of the Christian rulers, they had taken refuge in Persia where they enjoyed a good deal of religious freedom. No place of refuge was left for them except Persia, and thus their religious centre shifted from Judah and Jerusalem to Babylonia (*vide* Hutchinson's History of the Nations, p. 550). So, in the time of the Holy Prophet (on whom be peace and blessings of God!), the only government to which they could look for help was that of Persia, where their co-religionists enjoyed much influence, especially in the reign of Chosroes II (*vide* Jewish Encyclopædia, Vol. IX. page 648). In short, when the Jews saw that their efforts to check the progress of Islam had totally failed, they took to exciting the Persian Court against the Holy Prophet by various means, and as a result, Choroes II issued orders to the Governor of Yemen to send to him the Arabian claimant to prophethood as a captive. But when the envoys of the Governor of Yemen came to the Holy Prophet (on whom be peace and blessings of God!), he ordered them to see him the next day when he told them that his God had caused their King to be murdered. So they returned and related this incident to the Governor of Yemen. A few days after, the Governor of Yemen received a letter from Siroes, the son of Chosroes II, to the effect that he had killed his father on account of the latter's tyranny and that the Governor should, on his behalf, have the oath of alligence renewed from all the Chiefs of Yemen, and that the orders of his father about an inhabitant of Arabia should be considered as cancelled (*vide* Tabari vol.

III, pp. 1583 and 1584). Some historians, including Tabari himself, hold that it was the letter of the Holy Prophet (on whom be peace and blessings of God!) to Chosroes inviting him to Islam that was the occasion of his orders for the apprehension of the Holy Prophet. But on comparison of the dates of the above-mentioned events, it turns out to be a mistaken view. For, as we read in Zurqani, vol. II, p. 254, the letter in question was despatched from Medina on the first of Muharram, 7 A. H.—a date corresponding to 4th March, 628 A. D. (*vide* the Historians' History of the World, vol. VIII, p. 118), whereas Chosroes II, who sent orders to arrest the Holy Prophet had been assassinated on 28th February, 628 A. D. (*vide* the Historians' History of the World, vol. VIII, p. 95). Thus, the view that the letter of the Holy Prophet (on whom be peace and blessings of God) was the cause of Chosroes' orders is absurd on the face of it. So the only possible cause of Chosroes' ignominius orders was that his ears had been poisoned by malicious reports and these were the cause of his arrogant action,—a fact admitted by Sir William, Muir, the famous biographer of the Holy Prophet (*vide* Muir's life of Muhammad, p. 358), and it is to these efforts of the Jews that the Holy Quran alludes in the verse under comment. It is also pointed out to them that it was foolish on their part to suppose that they would succeed in that way. Their attention is called to the fact that they had already been responsible for two secret machinations. The *first* was against Solomon, when some members of their community turned rebels, hatched plots and stirred up bitter feelings against him by calling him an infidel, but on the other hand infidels were those who opposed him, hurled imputations against him, and set up against him secret societies in which were taught signs and symbols having hidden meanings quite different from their open import. But the Jews themselves reaped the ill-reward of their sinister schemes: their power, as a consequence, fell into decay, and at last they became so powerless that they were driven into exile towards Babylon. This account of

Jewish secret societies and conspiracies and treacherous signs and symbols, as alluded to in this verse, finds corroboration in I Kings, XI, 1—6, where we read that the charge of idol-worship was spread broadcast against Solomon. An account of his enemies is found in I Kings XI, 14, 23, 26, and a reference to secret plots is met with in II Chron. X, 3 and 4 where we learn that the Jews had sent for Jeroboam, a bitter foe of Solomon, immediately after his death and had attempted to make him agree to some demands of theirs, involving certain imputations against Solomon, before the accession of Solomon's son to the throne. We learn about the secret signs from I Kings XI, 29—32, in which ten tribes of Israelites are likened to ten pieces of a garment, and Jeroboam is told that these ten tribes were on his side against Solomon, and so it proved to be, for on the death of Solomon, these ten tribes made Jeroboam their King. Again, the reference of the Holy Qur-ān to the infidelity of Solomon's enemies finds its corroboration in II Chron. XI, 15, from which we learn that the enemies of Solomon, who falsely charged him with unbelief, themselves, on rising to power began to make temples for different idols and fell into idol-worship.

Besides the testimony of the Bible, there is another evidence to show that there was in the days of Solomon a secret society at work against him. An old tradition which was current among the mediaeval Free Masons indicates that Solomon was envious of the superior intelligence of Horam, the chief architect who built the temple of Solomon. He is said to have attempted to kill the great mason by having him thrown into a tank of molten brass, but he was saved by the spirit of his ancestor, Cain, who prophesied that at last his people would get the better of their enemy. Solomon, however, as the tradition goes, had him afterwards put to death. It is said to him that he had fixed certain secret signs which were a sort of mystery known only to him and his associates (*vide* Secret Societies of the World, volume II, page 10). We further learn from the book that before the period

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of the accepted masons, the same signs were used in all the Lodges as were current among the Masons of Solomon's time and that at the time of initiation, the event of Horam was related to the new member. However incredible the story as a whole may be, it, at least, points to the conclusion that Solomon's reign was, in one way or another, connected with secret societies which were much in vogue during his time.

The *second* occasion when, according to the Holy Qur-ān, the Israelites had resort to secret societies, was during their captivity in Babylon. But this time they were not acting against any prophet, but were, on the other hand, working under the leadership of two inspired personages. They were, in obedience to divine command, trying to bring about the deliverance of the Israelites. Their mission was to ' tear asunder' and ' break down ' the empire of the foes of the Israelites. These holy men told the new members, at the time of initiation, that they were a sort of trial from God, serving to differentiate between the good and the bad, and that the Israelites should not therefore refuse to believe what they said, because this would lead them to infidelity. In their teachings they drew a distinction between the males and the females, confining the membership to the males only (this is an old practice found among most of the secret societies). It is also stated that the disciples of those holy men directed their activities against those alone for whose chastisement they were commanded by God.

In this narration, the Holy Qur-an refers to the days when King Nebuchadnezzar brought the Jews as captives into Babylon and kept them there for a long time in slavery. The holy men referred to in the verse under comment were Haggai, the prophet and Zechariah, the son of Iddo (*vide* Ezra V). When Cyrus, King of Media and Persia, rose to power, the Israelites entered into a secret agreement with him and greatly facilitated his conquest of Babylon. In reward for this service, he allowed them to

return to their own country and moreover helped greatly in the re-building of the Temple (*vide* Historians' History of the World, vol. II, p. 126).

After stating that the Israelites of the Holy Prophet's days were following the same course which was adopted by the rebels of Solomon's days and which was later on adopted by them under two holy men in Babylon, it was necessary here to point out the ultimate upshot of their endeavours against the Holy Prophet (on whom be peace and blessings of God), because on the previous two occasions their efforts had met with different results. On the first occasion their conspiracy, being directed against a prophet of God, had ended in the total wreckage of their prestige and finally in their banishment to Babylon. On the second occasion, they took to the same course under two inspired personages and they were successful. Hence, in order to indicate whether the efforts of the Jews against the Holy Prophet would meet with failure, as they did in the days of Solomon, or with success as in Babylon, the Holy Qur-ān says :—These people learn what would harm them and bring them no profit; in other words, they will not be successful as in Babylon. Accordingly, the consequence of their hostile efforts was that Chosroes, their only supporter, met his death at the hands of his son, and they themselves were exiled from Arabia in the time of Omar. In the conculding portion of the verse, God adds :—"And certainly, they have known that he who purchased it should have no portion in the future life," meaning that a secret plotter against the elect of God can never reap a good frint.

RUKU' 13

يايها الذين آمنوا لاتقولوا راعنا وقولوا انظرنا واسمعوا وللكافرين عذاب اليم-
ما يود الذين كفروا من اهل الكتاب ولا المشركين ان ينزل عليكم من خير من ربكم-
والله يختص برحمته من يشاء والله ذو الفضل العظيم-

105. Yā aiyyu-hal-ladhīna āmanú, lā taqúlú, Rā'inā, wa qúlunzurnā, wasma'ú; walil-kāfirína adhābun 'alīm.

106. Mā yawad-dul-ladhīna kafarū min ahlil-kitābi wa lal mushrikīna an-yunazzala 'alaikum-min khairim-mir-Rabbikum; wallāhu yakhtaṣṣu bi-raḥmatihī man-yasha', wallāhu dhul-faḍlil-'azīm.

105. Ye who believe, Say not Rā'ina, but say Unzurnā and hearken ; and for the disbelievers is a painful punishment.

106. They who disbelieve, whether of the people of the book or of those who associate gods with Allah, desire not that any good should be sent down to you from your lord ; and Allah chooses for His mercy whomsoever He pleases ; and Allah is of exceeding bounty.

101. After mentioning the intrigues which the Jews carried on with the outsiders to ruin the mission of the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of God he upon him !), those of their machinations are spoken of by means of which they sought to sow dissension and discord among the Muslims, desiring to create a spirit of arrogance among them against the Holy Prophet and thus deprive them of the rich rewards which they were reaping as a community. They were in the habit of devising plans to detract from the reverential awe with which the minds of the Muslims were inspired towards the Holy Prophet (on whom be peace and blessings of God). One of these mean attempts was to address such words to the Holy Prophet as could bear a two-fold sense, one good and the other bad. The Muslims also, in imitation of the Jews and in ignorance of their real motive, began to imitate their language. One of the words used by the Jews was راعِنا *rā'ina* which is a compound formed from راعِي *rā'i* and نا *na* and means "show favour to us". But as the word belongs to the conjugation of مُفاعَلة *mufa'ala*, it gives the idea of reciprocity and it therefore means "show favour to us that we may show favour to you." Hence this expression involved disrespect to the Holy Prophet. Hence, God forbids the Muslims to use such words, and advises them to use such langugage as

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may be respectful and unequivocal. He exhorts them to say انظرنا *unzurnā*, instead of راعنا *rā'inā*, because the former, unlike *rā'inā* conveys no bad sense, but only means "have regard for us." He further advises them to listen to the Holy Prophet attentively, so that they might not be in need of using such words. (The word *rā'inā* or *unzurnā* is used as an apology for not hearing or understanding what was said. It corresponds to the English expression 'I beg your pardon.')

The word راعنا *rā'ina* which the Muslims were forbidden to use when addressing the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of God be upon him !) can also be traced to the root راعن *rā'in* which means 'a fool'. When used in addressing a person, it takes the form of *ra'ina* and means "O Fool !" Similarly, the word, when pronounced with a very slight modification of the voice, may mean "O Our Shepherd,"

ماننسخ من آية اوننسها نأت بخير منها اومثلها۔ الم تعلم ان الله على قل شيئ قدير

107 Ma nansukh min āyatin au nūnsi-hā na'ti bi-kharim-minhā au mithli hā ; a-lam ta'lam annallāha 'alā kulli shai'in qadīr ?

107. Whatever *ayat* we abrogate or cause to be forgotten, we bring one better than it or one like it. Knowest thou not that Allah has power over all things ?

102. Some have attempted to infer from this verse that some of the verses of the Holy Qur-ān have been abrogated. But this conclusion is grievously erroneous and unwarranted. There is nothing in this verse to indicate that the word *ayat* according in this verse refers to the Quranic verses. Both in the preceding and the following verses, a reference is made to *the people of the Book* and their jealousies for the new revelation, which clearly shows that the *ayat* (commandments) represented in this verse as abrogated belongs to the previous revelations. It is pointed out in this verse that portions of some of the old scriptures did justify abrogation and portions again had, through length of time, been consigned to oblivion so that no trace

of them could be found in the heavenly books. It was, therefore, necessary to modify certain portions and to restore the lost ones. So, God abrogated some portions of the old books and replaced them as well as the missing portions by a better or similar revelation. This is the only meaning which is consistent with the context and the general spirit of the Holy Quran.

The Jews themselves admit that after the children of Israel were carried as captives to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar, the whole of Pentateuch was lost.

The other meaning put on the verse by some translators, *viz.*, that certain verses of the Holy Qur-ān have been abrogated, is not only opposed to the words of Holy Qur-ān and the context of the verse, but is also against reason ; nor can any saying of the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of God be upon him !) be quoted in its favour. On the contrary the Holy Prophet is reported to have said that the whole of the Holy Qur-ān must be strictly followed. Besides this the Holy Qur-ān itself testifies to its immaculacy. The well-known verse :—إنا نحن نزلنا الذكر وإنا له لحافظون "Truly, it is We that have sent down the exhortation, and certainly We will guard it " (XV, 10) leads to the conclusion that God promised to protect both the letter and the spirit of Holy Qur-ān. If the abrogation of any part of the Holy Qur-ān be conceded, the promise about the protection of the spirit of the Holy Qur-ān becomes null and void, for in that case it would be impossible to distinguish the abrogated portions from the rest of the Holy Qur-ān.

There is absolutely no self-contradiction in the Holy Qur-ān, and therefore there is no need of resorting to the theory of abrogation. The so-called contradictions only betray the want of deep study on the part of those who favour this doctrine. When one fails to understand two verses in their true relations, one sees a contradiction between them and takes recourse to the convenient theory that one of the two verses has been abrogated by the other. As soon as they appear to be reconcilable, the abrogation theory becomes gratuitous.

The Ahmadiyya Movement

THE Ahmadiyya Movement was founded by Hazrat Ahmad, the Promised Messiah and Mehdi and the expected Messenger of all nations. In the spirit and power of all the earlier prophets he came to serve and reinterpret the final and eternal teachings laid down by God in the Holy Quran. The Movement therefore represents the true and real Islam and seeks to uplift humanity and establish peace throughout the world. Hazrat Ahmad died in 1908, and the present Head of the Movement is his second successor, Hazrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad, under whose direction the Movement has established Missions in many parts of the world, the following being the addresses of some of them :—

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